

Aledo Community Center and City Hall

*by Gay Larson
Parker County Master Gardener
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The Parker County Master Gardeners have planted over 20 trees on both properties. The first tree planted was a Texas mountain laurel in 1999, it has beautiful blue blooms in the spring and is on a berm that can be seen from the street. A bur oak, aristocrat pear and Bradford pear trees were planted in 2000, along with two weeping willows. Although, only one survived, one willow was run over by a 4 wheeling teenage. A lilac sprout from tree at Community Center in 2001 was transplanted to city hall on a berm. In 2003, many desert willows were planted from saplings bought from the forest service and put into plastic pots for half a year, until a good root system formed. Two Leyland cypress trees were planted in 2004, along with a Shantung maple. And in winter of 2006, two Tonto Crape Myrtles were transplanted from a Master Gardener's landscape.

At Community Center, we have planted many crape myrtles, one in iris bed, one by Christmas tree, four in west bed. In 1997, the 4-H club landscaped the east side of building, planting three crape myrtles. Of course, we have the two lilac trees that have been there for many years and the Chinese photinia that was planted in the 1970's when the building was built. A Shumard red oak tree was planted in 2005. The pine tree, which is lighted each Christmas season, has been planted at least three times since 1997. The first one died from lack of water. The next tree died after two years for no apparent reason. Then in 2001, the current one was planted; now it is dead or nearly dead. Later this year when the planting season is better, a new one can be planted again. This time a new variety and a new location is the plan.

As for shrubs, perennials and groundcovers, the Community Center has a row of Will Fleming hollies with purple wintercreeper euonymus underneath. Dwarf burford hollies, dwarf yaupon hollies, Indian hawthorn around variegated hydrangea with thrift in front make a statement. The hollies and hawthorn are evergreen, the hawthorn blooms pink in spring. The hydrangea blooms in spring, along with the thrift. In addition, hardy hibiscus, artemesia, in a bed with Texas star hibiscus and standard nandina compliment one another. There is purple wintercreeper euonymus under the large, pink flowering crape myrtle.

Vines along this wall are coral honeysuckle. There is a hedge of Japanese boxwoods with New Gold lantana planted in front that is wonderfully drought tolerant. Also, in that bed is liriopoe under the Chinese photinia. There are crape myrtles with climbing red roses on trellises, red salvia greggii and an althea cultivar named "Diana". In 2005, the Master Gardeners built a bed that has a pomegranate, three single bridal wreath spireas, ruby grass, and crossvine on a trellis. In this same bed are Bonarinenses or Brazilian verbena, purple coneflower, maxmillian sunflower, fescus grasses, and daffodils that bloom in the early spring.

In one large bed, a woven waddle fence was built to hide the air conditioner, alongside a yellow lady banks rose on an arbor with Texas betony planted underneath. Two rosemary plants, Texas star hibiscus, Katie ruellia that line the walkway, and cockscomb are next to the building. The other side of the walkway is a bed of 'camera' lantana, ice plant, yellow cannas, variegated euonymus, Texas sage, garden ruellia, and a lilac bush. We cleared most of the creek and keep it mowed two

times a year. In this process, the Master Gardeners have found a native blooming honeysuckle bush and a Mexican buckeye in bloom.

The bed on the Old Annetta Road side, to the west, has another lilac bush, Manhattan euonymus, goldstrum rudbeckia, turks cap, and iris in many colors. The rose bush, blooms prolifically in the spring with tiny white blooms and is an original that was planted years ago and was transplanted to this location for more sun. One dwarf crape myrtle and a decorative clay pot is planted with annuals each year under the pruned cedar elms trees, to finish this bed for street beauty.

Shrubs at the city hall property originally consisted of the Chinese hollies, the hedge of dwarf burford hollies, along with two crape myrtles flanking windows. In that bed, we took out lirioppe that had brown tips because of the west sun and replaced with Katie Ruellia. Texas Star hibiscus, Mexican bush sage and daffodils are flanked on either side of this bed. There is Asian jasmine in back of this bed under the hollies to act as filler. In 2004, we put iron decorative fencing next to sidewalk.

The groundcover under the nine oak trees was planted by a 4-H group in 1997 with 500 variegated vinca major plants. Each year leaf rollers spoil the tip ends of this plant so this year we hope to spray with a systemic insecticide to prevent this from happening. Once this large bed finishes blooming bright blue flowers in springtime, we string-line trim to keep the bed neat and tidy.

Yellow lantana that are winter tender but return each year, is at base of the shrubs by the sign that says "Aledo City Hall." In this bed are three burford hollies on one side and one on the other with raised rock beds.

A trellis with passion vine sits behind three burford hollies with white and blue lantana under them.

The patio is between three oak trees. The benches built in 2005 for the Master Gardeners members to have a place to sit during the horticulture lessons each Wednesday. In the three beds by the patio and under the trees are White Nancy lamium and plumbago in one, coral bells in the second bed and the other has plumbago and red begonias.

In 2003, a sign was placed in front of property denoting the Parker County Master Gardeners as designers and maintenance crew for landscaping Aledo City Hall.

Along with the Texas mountain laurel, three Texas sages, green santolina, and red yucca were original plantings on this large berm. Each year there are annuals planted twice a year for color. Snapdragons, purslane, pansies, kale, portulaca, pentas, petunias, and verbena have been some of the annuals planted on the front side, facing the street. This year we have zinnias the profusion series, planted for color. Candel trees, with large yellow blooms in fall, were featured in 2002 and Castor bean plants with their decorative leave and seed heads, have made a showing in 2004 and 2005 on top of this berm. The transplanted lilac, 'purple knight' salvia greggii and Russian sage replaced an original yarrow planting. Then garden phlox was added, more red yucca and the Texas sage reseeded. In 2005, daffodils and Byzantine gladiolas were planted along with pink skullcap and yellow lantana. Over the years, plants have been planted and died because the top of the berm dries out very quickly and the sprinkler does not cover adequately. Tropical hibiscus is periodically planted for summer color. The decorative boulders on top of the berm add interest.

Additional boulders make a definite contribution to the ornamental grass berm. Cultivars of grasses are Japanese silver grass 'gracillimus' and 'variegatas', weeping love grass, one miscanthus 'giganticas' that was dug up because it was invasive and looked a lot like Johnson grass.

Transplanted sedum lines the front side of the grass berm and on a corner of the berm a white hardy hibiscus was planted with dinner plate size blooms all summer and Mexican mint marigolds in broken pot was sunk into this bed. Each year the marigold reseeds and blooms a bright yellow in the fall. In 2002, various daylilies and Louisiana iris were added to this berm. Dwarf morning glories reseed each year and blooms pink from summer until frost. The grasses are drought tolerant and look beautiful with their white plumes all winter long. We prune these grasses each February, right before the spring growth.

Crawdad Creek was a muddy marsh area that ran from a 4 ft. culvert under the railroad tracks to a culvert under the road. In summer, it was dry with weeds and in winter a muddy area impossible to mow. A large amount of clay soil was brought in to build a ridge at the mouth of the creek. This creek was named for the large amount of crawdads that live in the creek. In 2002, at end of the creek, a pond was dug so that the water could pool, then commercial grade weed block started the construction with large boulders placed on top to outline the creek. After the flat rocks were strategically placed in creek, 3" river rock was placed in between the rocks. The first large rain washed all the river rock into the pond. The Master Gardeners hand picked all the river rock out of creek and put into wheelbarrow to remove. A very tedious and time consuming job. A lesson was learned and will not be repeated. After flat rocks were in placed in the bottom of the creek, the gardeners planted perennials along the sides in pockets and built beds at mouth of the creek. To the west of the creek, a bed was built with rocks and planted with Texas star hibiscus, desert willows, red salvia greggii and hardy hibiscus. Standing tall beside that bed are daylilies, which bloom orange each spring. Louisiana iris bloom in early spring in a bright purple and then Mexican mint marigold blooms yellow in the fall. At the end of creek is a weeping love grass for visual interest. In 2004, on the other side of Crawdad Creek, a bed was built with railroad ties and in that bed is a desert willow and bright pink hardy hibiscus.

In 2005, we enlarged the west side of Crawdad Creek by building an addition to an existing bed. We placed railroad ties filled with bedding soil and planted one variegated privet, three cotoneasters, and three Bowles wallflowers. As mulch, we put the river rock left from earlier mistake in the creek. Along the east side of Crawdad Creek we have planted rosemary, blue spirea or Bluebeard, New Gold lantana, weeping love grass, and a transplanted vitex that blooms a beautiful blue in the spring and early summer.

In 2005, the gardeners placed edging around the pfitzer junipers on top of ridge and incorporated Asian jasmine, leyland cypress flank each side. We also added sedum, "hen and chicks" to the juniper bed, plus bulbs.

A rock walkway to allow us to walk from one side of Crawdad Creek to the other was built. It took many hours placing the rock, edging and sackrete to finish this path.

We seeded with 2 pounds of bluebonnet seeds on a 2,000 foot area behind the building in September. The soil was raked with a tractor, we spread the seeds, and then we walked on area to

pack in the seeds. We strategically placed large rocks to be used for picture taking in the spring when the bluebonnets bloom. In 2005, there was a small blooming period and we tilled the area again and added 2 more pounds of seed. Parker County has had a drought and so few bluebonnets bloomed in 2006.

Also, in 2004, the Iron bed was designed. We tilled up the area west of the creek and planted desert willow saplings from the Parker County Forest Service. We also transplanted vitex into the Iron bed that was named for the iron antiques that decorate the outline of the bed. A rusted horse trough is planted with annuals each year. A donated bench sits in this bed to view the creek. Corkscrew willows line the creek.

In 2005, on the east side of creek a Madam Butterfly canna was transplanted, then we added other yellow cannas and other peach cannas.

We just finished a 1,200 sq. foot rose garden in 2006. We tilled in 4 yards of expanded shale that was recommended by Texas A&M, two yards of bedding soil and 6 yards of composted cow manure. We added edging and built a walkway through the garden with decomposed granite. We built two large arbors, for the climbing roses that are 8 feet tall and 6 feet wide. We had a wrought iron trellis built for a climbing rose. The drip irrigation was installed before we planted these carefully chosen roses: Climbing Pinkie, Zephirine Drouhin, and New Dawn to climb arbors, Graham Thomas, a yellow David Austin rose and Belinda's Dream which blooms a pale pink. There are three of each, Maggie and Knock Out roses, with dark pink blooms. White blooming Iceberg roses and three Nearly Wild roses that have pink blooms join the grouping. Orange roses are F. J. Lindheimer and three Livin Easy roses. One Old Blush rose that is a light pink, rounds out the total number of 29 roses. Bricks are placed side by side to create a finished look at entrances to rose garden. There is a metal decorative bench in pathway, to allow a stop to smell the roses. The signage for the rose garden says, "Neil Collins Memorial Rose Garden landscaped and designed by Parker County Master Gardeners with love."